WORLD CHRONICLE

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PROGRAMME: "WORLD CHRONICLE"

GUEST: Amb. Maj Britt Theorin, Chairman
Swedish Disarmament Commission

JOURNALISTS: James Bone, The Times, London
Raghida Dergham, Al-Hayat, London
Walter Pfaeffle, Kuwait News Agency

MODERATOR: Michael Littlejohns

SYNOPSIS

Planning for Peace

Maj Britt Theorin of Sweden, who chaired a recent update on the 1980 (UN) Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons, describes some of the process by which twelve experts went about the work of compiling the report. Ambassador Theorin claims countries will now have to plan for peace as the world economy can no longer sustain both an arms race and development programmes.

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VOICE From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns and this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

Disarmament and the protection of the environment are two key challenges facing the international community of the 1990s -- and there just might be a rewarding interface. Tending to be rather complex, environmental problems certainly could make good use of military technology and hardware no longer allocated for war. Military techniques, equipment and personnel might speed global disaster relief or help to dispose of radioactive materials and toxic wastes. Satellite technologies could figure in better agricultural monitoring and planning.

Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin of Sweden believes much of this can and should happen. She recently served as Chairman of a group updating the U.N.'s 1980 Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons and is our guest today. She will be interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by: James Bone of The Times of London; Raghida Dergham of Al-Hayat; and Walter Pfaeffle of the Kuwait News Agency.

Amb. Theorin, welcome to **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

LITTLEJOHNS: Madame Ambassador, we have been told that the peace dividend that we were all supposed to enjoy from the end of the cold war departed for the Gulf when the Iraq invasion of Kuwait occurred, what benefits may we perhaps draw from disarmament if we're not going to get the peace dividend?

THEORIN: Well, first I tend to not really agree with you. I'm still hopeful that we can solve the Iraqi crisis by diplomatic and economic sanctions and diplomatic means and skills so that is the first part but I can come back to that. What I would like to say is really the old saying, if you would like to have peace prepare for war, has no relevance any longer. If you would like to have peace you have to prepare for peace and that's why you also have to prepare for the period coming when the crisis now seems to ease down in Europe at least and to release the resources in a good way. What I had in mind when I took up this idea of environment and disarmament is that there are lots of knowledge in the military field -- technology, know-how -- there are infrastructures and there are productions used for military activities which could be used in a very good way to save the environment and to restore what we have destroyed in the environment and that's why I think it's a good idea to plan for that period.

LITTLEJOHNS: Can you give us some examples of the kind of things, the kind of technology that might be transferred to helping the environment?

THEORIN: Yes. I can say for instance if you look upon remote sensing, that is an area which is now used very much in the military side, and the infrared functions, that could be used to find out how the implications could be done for agriculture monitoring, to find out when it's time to get the things out of the earth and when the period is coming when it's better to bring it. It's a very typical way of using it. You have lots of environmental things which have to be studied and really try to find out how to solve it, where the military technology and the science can be used very carefully in measuring for instance the ices we have around the earth and there you can find out the pollution that's taking place and there you have all this knowledge on the military side.

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LITTLEJOHNS: Is this already happening Ambassador or is this something we'll have to wait for?

THEORIN: What I would say is that this has really started in some countries. In quite many countries we are looking into it. In my own country because these are disciplines which go over in between different disciplines, in the university for instance we have a co-operation between the Defence Research Agency in Sweden, the agriculture university in one part of Sweden, the university as such, and other agencies involved in this and they are trying to allocate both where the environmental problems are and where the knowledge on the military side is which could be used to help the environment to survive.

BONE: Ambassador, it's sometimes said that war plays a role in the global economy by reflating it at times of recession. We're about to enter a recession it appears, do you think that there's any relation between what's happening in the Gulf and the stage of the business cycle that the world economy is in?

THEORIN: Of course there are relations no doubt about it. The crisis in the Gulf must have a connexion with the oil and that has a big connexion with the economy as such in most of the countries of the world. What I am interested in mostly is perhaps to find ways to solve because I think we have to keep in mind that conflicts will always occur in the world. The question is not to really get rid of the conflicts, the question is how do you handle them in the best way and I must say that when the tension is eased so drastically and so quickly as it has done in Europe and when we really see that disarmament has started, not only on nuclear weapons, on chemical weapons, and for sure the biggest disarmament treaty will in some days be

signed in Europe on conventional weapons, then you have to be prepared for what you do, how do you solve, how do you use the resources released from it. In the Iraqi crisis and the crisis in the Persian Gulf I think it's too easy to say that you need to have the military resources to solve that crisis.

BONE: What I'm driving at more is whether a massive deployment of forces and the mobilization of military hardware and everything is actually a way that capitalist economies reflate at times of recession? For instance, the Second World War came after the Great Depression, the Korean War pulled America out of a depression, is that not what traditionally the Western economies have done?

THEORIN: Yes, but you know sometimes reality outdates fiction. It's not always that history repeats itself but I do see the trends you're talking towards, necause none of us could ever have recognized the change which took place in Eastern Europe in one year's time. In less than one year's time the big changes came, in less than one year's time the now president of Czechoslovakia couldn't go to Sweden to receive a degree he got and so it's a total big change which none of us could foresee. We could perhaps have foreseen a changing but not this drastically and what I am saying is if we tend to accept the black side, if we tend to always look into what history has told us in dark colours, we tend to repeat history. If we tend to say, come on this is a lesson learned by history, we don't have to repeat it, how do we avoid it and how we try to get out of a crisis without letting a war come into it. I'm not willing to say that the economy rules all over the world but it rules quite a lot, it has quite a lot to say but it's up to the people of the world to make the decision if they would like to see the war break out or not.

DERGHAM: I'll go along with this line of questioning for just one question if you don't mind. You mention disarmament in Europe, in particular in the nuclear field, and you said even in the conventional field it's coming along and there is one notion that claims that military industries are quite happy about the developments in the Gulf because Europe was no longer, in view of the new East/West partnership, it's no longer their place for competition for them, so now the Gulf escalation is rather good for them. What is your opinion of such a notion?

THEORIN: Of course I can understand that from the strict commercial side they would like to see something occurring but at the same time they do have lots of problems because their stores are filled with weapons all over. For sure, the Middle East is overwhelmed with weapons. There's no need for really much more of production for it but from the hawkish side of the view, of course it's good to get a crisis coming up so they don't have to directly come into a situation where they have to end or change their production. But generally speaking, it's not only in the United States. All over the world the military industry now has to start changing and they have started already to change their production towards the civil side.

DERGHAM: They have started that in particular before the Gulf Crisis, do you think they have had to change their decision after the Gulf Crisis knowing that there is quite a promise for war, unfortunately?

THEORIN: No, my impression is not that. I think that the long trend is very clear even for the military industries and I think most of them still counter with that war shouldn't break out.

DERGHAM: Have they succeeded in developing their industries towards peaceful uses?

THEORIN: No.

DERGHAM: Where is it more apparent and why haven't they succeeded?

THEORIN: They haven't succeeded, very easily so, because they haven't prepared themselves for it. They have always countered with that there will be another order of more military equipment and this is the pattern. If you look into my own country, if you look into the planned socialist economies, if you look into this country, they always counter with that there is a pressure for more weapons. They have to face this now and the problem is that this has been discussed for many years in the United Nations and we have had investigations done, we have had lots of big work done by some of my predecessors, not least also women, but the countries themselves and the industries themselves have not really taken into account that they have to plan for peace and not only for war otherwise they will really have lots of problems occurring and the debate in this country shows that very clearly. Wherever you go in this area where there are big military industries, the workers, the employers, they say I work, we are losing our work and they will press for more decisions made for more military production. But that time is out. Even if you look into the budget of this country they won't get too much more coming out now.

PFAEFFLE: You spoke before about the rapid changes in Eastern Europe. Now most of these changes were made possible through bilateral negotiations yet the United Nations is always pushing the multinational approach, what argument can you make for this global approach?

THEORIN: Well, the global is very clear. If you are going to get rid of all nuclear weapons you can't accept only bilateral negotiations. It's good with the bilateral negotiations, we do appreciate that, but we do have to have more. We have three more nuclear weapons states, which will, sooner or later, come into the negotiations of the nuclear disarmament. Chemical weapons as such, it can't be negotiated between two countries. Chemical weapons are a global threat and it is really threatening the whole world. To get a global convention on chemical weapons, which we now are I would say in the last phase of it in Geneva, that has to be globally agreed on -- and not only only bilaterally so most of the weapons have to be agreed on and discussed in multilateral terms -- it is an interrelated pattern I would like see. Bilateral is good, but in the end lots of them have to also be negotiated in the multilateral field.

PFAEFFLE: But some countries just refuse to sit down with other countries to negotiate reducing their stockpiles.

THEORIN: We know that. Tell Sweden. I mean we have so many times put proposals on the table, both when it goes for nuclear weapons and other weapons and we know that that upsets, not least, the two superpowers. It has upset them for quite a long time. Suddenly we have the majority and we have most of the countries behind our proposal, for instance, for a comprehensive test ban treaty and they don't want to see us interfere. The superpowers mostly don't like small countries to come to say, but .....

LITTLEJOHNS: Small countries don't like superpowers to interfere either.

THEORIN: No, they don't and that's very important. That's why the U.N. is so important because the U.N. has the role to play, not least for the smaller countries, to safeguard us from intervening in our internal affairs.

LITTLEJOHNS: The programme is **WORLD CHRONICLE**. Our guest is Maj Britt Theorin, Chairman of the Swedish Disarmament Commission.

BONE: Ambassador, I was struck at the last General Assembly general debate here at the number of ministers who expressed support for the idea of arms transparency, that there should be some kind of United Nations mechanism for registering arms exports, listing the strength of forces of various countries. Can you tell us a little bit about this notion?

THEORIN: I think that is extremely necessary, not least now when the tension is easing in Europe. We don't want to see the weapons released from Europe popping up in other areas of the world and be used in conflicts there. Very easily said. We have at least one lesson learned from the Persian Gulf Crisis and that is if we hadn't supported Saddam Hussein with the weapons coming from most of these big countries like the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union, he couldn't have threatened Kuwait as he has done. And that is a lesson which I think these countries have to learn and the first step in that direction must be to have an international system of registering weapons transfers, or where it takes place, where you send it, where it goes and the next step will be how to diminish the transfer of the weapons.

BONE: Am I right? I understand that the people who support this are the larger powers and the people who oppose it are the developing nations many of whom don't want to have their arms imports registered?

THEORIN: No, you're not quite right. The pattern has changed. This was a pattern before. I brought this idea up in '83 that we should find a way of looking into the weapons transfer and we had the rejection from the developing countries then. Now it has changed. They are on board. Several of the developing countries were on the resolution which proposed that this should take place so the picture has changed quite a lot in the right direction.

BONE: And the developed countries, they still support this idea or they have some doubts about this idea?

THEORIN: Well, you know those who sell weapons don't like it, those who buy weapons didn't like it but I think that we have learned a lesson also from this Persian Gulf that you have in one way or another to find a system where you could find out where is a weapon, where do the transfers take place and then find the way to get them to diminish the transfer of the weapons.

LITTLEJOHNS: Raghida Dergham, perhaps you could ask a question which would get us back on track on the environment, how disarmament is going to help the environment?

DERGHAM: Let me try nuclear because you put out a report on the nuclear states which are five as we know -- the United States, Soviet Union, China, Britain and France. Now, of course their information regarding nuclear data is secretive, it's classified as far as I know, so how do we know exactly, how

much can we be certain of the nuclear arsenals they have and one critical issue that was pointed out in the report was the so-called geographic spread of nuclear weapons which are the nuclear weapons belonging on vessels of these States which have immunity, so what could be done about that geographic spread of nuclear weapons?

THEORIN: Let me first say that this nuclear weapon study is the first one where we have three nuclear weapons countries around and that created I must say, internally, quite a lot of problems because non-nuclear weapon countries and three nuclear weapon countries and those nuclear weapon countries were Soviet Union, the United States and France. The Soviet Union facilitated us with lots of information of very interesting new things which no one knew about before, about the medical effects of testing in Semipalatinsk and the race of cancer and leukemia and things coming out of the testing there which was not released before. They gave us a lot of other information of big interest.

LITTLEJOHNS: Damage to the water supply and things like that?

THEORIN: Yes, and they gave us also for instance a thing which one must keep in mind; people who are handling the nuclear weapons must be in an extraordinary shape and we know by knowledge that humans are weak personalities so we know that some of them have to leave because they might have alcoholic problems or drug problems and other things. We got the figures from the Soviets and they were quite shocking that they have to take away quite many of them every year because they couldn't rely on their personalities in that field. So we got lots of interesting facts, official facts, from the Soviet Union and we also got quite some good facts from the French and even from the

Americans but many of our resources are so to say quite understood that they are facts even if they are not directly giving us every detail of it. What we described in the study is not only the amounts of nuclear weapons, which I think is quite correct without no doubt, but we also give the trends in the nuclear weapons -- what's taking place, what they plan to do, what is on the way to come and we also describe the medical and environmental effects of nuclear weapons as such and we also have a big discussion of the geographical spread ard of .....

LITTLEJOHNS: You mean testing, the testing of nuclear weapons?

THEORIN: Both production and testing, so we show up the cost and the effects, the medical effects. You know the production has led to quite a lot of environmental problems and the cost of restoring this is quite enormous so this is described in the study and why I say this is that, because this is a consensus study, it's an agreed study so there are quite many things we would love to have there which we couldn't get into it for that reason.

DERGHAM: But in that report you termed nuclear testing as a divisive issue. I think you said that there was one test every nine days average in the last 45 years by the five nuclear powers and that a lot of them have refused to stop testing that's why we don't have a comprehensive test ban treaty, and then you also termed as a critical issue the issue of geographic spread of nuclear weapons, so can you tell us why one is so divisive and one is so critical?

THEORIN: Both of them are critical. I mean the testing is there for really no other reason than to develop new nuclear weapons, that is the main reason for it but as we had two nuclear weapons around who didn't want to have that described in those terms from their side it is more or less said in the study that most of the members thought that this was the high top priority issue but some others didn't agree to it and that is the way of describing that there were differences in the study as such. But this is known to everyone. This is an international fact that there are some nuclear weapons who don't want to have a stop put on testing.

LITTLEJOHNS: Nuclear weapons states?

THEORIN: Nuclear weapon states, yes. But then the geographical spread is something which is brought up and which is very dangerous but we can see the threshold states and we can also see not least the development of ballistic missiles which might carry nuclear weapons being a threat coming up and we try to describe that too in the study.

PFAEFFLE: You spoke about the facts and you were referring to those five nuclear powers but let's talk about the facts of some of these other powers who may have weapons, nuclear weapons, or maybe pretty close to producing them. Could you perhaps comment on some of these countries, specifically Israel, Iraq, Pakistan, South Africa?

THEORIN: Yes, we have discussed that very carefully in the study too but let's say in the study I think we mention only South Africa and Israel as the countries we know who have the capability or close to the capability but everyone knows that there is knowledge. We know for instance that India has tested nuclear weapons, we know that there is knowledge in many

of the other countries close to developing nuclear weapons. When it goes for Iraq I think they are quite a bit from coming to producing nuclear weapons, even if they have some facilities in the area, but they are not in the real neighbourhood. It will take quite some years until they will be ready to develop one nuclear missile as far as I understand.

BONE: When we talk about the link between disarmament and the environment you seem to be talking mainly about adapting weapons technology to be able to deal with environmental problems. I wonder about another linkage which is the effects of testing on Pacific atolls or the effects of accidents at weapons producing nuclear facilities in the Soviet Union for instance? Have you looked at that?

THEORIN: Not directly but I would have loved to. In this now proposed new study, because what I have proposed is that the U.N. should look into how we could use the technology and the know-how, the infrastructure and the production on the military side for environmental purposes, and that is a study which should take place in one year's time so it could be available for the Brazilian Conference on Environment. What we have looked into when it goes for the effects of nuclear weapons testing is that I would have loved in this study that we had recommended that there would be done an international, independent study very closely looking to, not least, the medical effects of nuclear testing and what I have in mind is both the French testing and the Soviet testing, and I would also say the American testing. We couldn't get that recommendation due to the fact that we had to have a consensus study. I hope that the countries involved in that area will bring that issue up.

BONE: This idea of beating swords into ploughshares has been around for thousands of years, why now? Why should it happen now finally?

THEORIN: It's due time. It has to come.

BONE: Hasn't it always been due time?

THEORIN: Well, one can say so but you know we can't afford it. The lesson is very easy to learn. You brought up the economic side. We can't afford to both have an arms race and to get people and countries to survive and develop. We have to choose and the choice is very clear to me.

DERGHAM: And what would be the role of the non-governmental organizations, those who are very aware of environmental needs and the need to make the environmental issue a household issue, what would be their role besides the governments and international organizations?

THEORIN: Being a non-governmental body myself -- I haves three hats, I'm both a politician in Parliament in 20 years, I'm Ambassador for Disarmament and I'm a peacenik -- I do tend to say that the NGOs are extremely important in every field, both for disarmament and for environment, and I hope that they will see this new initiative taken here being a value initiative which they can support in many ways, to press the governments to say, come on this is a good idea. What knowledge do we have here, what techniques can we use to save the environment and press them to take part in that work.

DERGHAM: And is there a role for the same organizations in bringing about pressure on countries to open up their facilities for inspection, their nuclear facilities for inspection, such as Israel who refuses to open them and Pakistan I believe also refuses? You could correct me if I'm wrong.

THEORIN: Absolutely. There is a need. Openness is a new pattern since three, or four or five years which have opened up for this situation in Europe and openness and transparency in every field has to be there so it would be a very good idea if they showed up what they had, all around, in the weapons laboratories and production.

LITTLEJOHNS: Amb. Theorin, you've spoken about the need in your group to take decision by consensus, in order to arrive at that consensus have you had serious problems?

THEORIN: Oh yes. I tell you we had serious problems. For sure we had to reach it but you must understand that's why the recommendations we would like to have seen there many of us we had to withdraw them to get a consensus. Yes, it gave us quite a lot of problems.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mostly from the nuclear powers I suppose?

THEORIN: Yes, I could say so. It gave me such a problem that in the very last night I dreamt the whole night about one of the delegates and I told him the next morning and I said, "I dreamt about you last night". And he said, "Nightmares"? "Yes".

LITTLEJOHNS: Ambassador, thank you very much for joining us on this edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE.**

Our guest has been Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin, Chairman of the Swedish Disarmament Commission. She was interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by: James Bone of The Times of London; Raghida Dergham of Al-Hayat; and Walter Pfaeffle of the Kuwait News Agency.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

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